

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for training a user of software for programming a programmable logic controller, comprising the steps of:

5 providing to the user a training hyperlink option in response to the user encountering difficulties with programming the programmable logic controller;

 communicating information automatically over a communications network, in response to selection of the training hyperlink option, wherein the information communicated automatically pertains to the difficulties encountered by the user; and

10 linking the user to customized training resources addressing the difficulties based on the information, so as to provide the user solutions to the difficulties.

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2. The method of claim 1, wherein the training hyperlink option is provided in response to a request by the user.

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3. The method of claim 1, wherein the training hyperlink option is provided automatically in response to an error when using the software.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the information comprises data indicating at least one part of the software being used by the user.

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5. The method of claim 5, wherein the information further comprises data indicating at least one particular error made by the user.

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6. The method of claim 1, wherein the training resources comprise material which is presented at an internet web site.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein the training resources comprise a multimedia presentation.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein the training resources comprise a link to a customer service representative so as to allow the user to communicate with the customer service representative.
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9. The method of claim 1, wherein the communications network is a secure network with limited access.
10. The method of claim 1, wherein the communications network is a private, internal network.
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11. The method of claim 1, wherein the programmable logic controller is used for factory automation purposes, and wherein the training resources are related to the factory automation purposes.
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12. The method of claim 5, wherein the information is used to compile statistics in order to determine relative frequencies of various difficulties encountered with various parts of the software.
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13. The method of claim 1, wherein the training resources are modifiable in order to more effectively provide solutions to the difficulties.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein the training resources are modifiable at the same time as the software remains unmodified.

15. A system for training a user of software for programming a programmable logic controller, comprising:

5 a user device, operatively coupled to a programmable logic controller, for enabling the user to use the software and thereby program the programmable logic controller, wherein the user device is capable of providing an optional hyperlink to the user in response to difficulty encountered by the user, and wherein the user device is also capable of
10 providing a difficulties information signal which is indicative that the user has selected the hyperlink option in order to request training, and which additionally is indicative of the difficulty; and

15 a training means, operatively coupled to the user device via a communication network, for providing a training signal to the user device in response to the difficulties information signal, wherein the training signal is indicative of customized solutions to the difficulty.

16. The system of claim 15, wherein the optional hyperlink is provided in
20 response to a request by the user.

17. The system of claim 15, wherein the optional hyperlink is provided in response to an error when using the software.

25 18. The system of claim 15, wherein the difficulties information signal comprises data indicating at least one part of the software being used by the user.

19. The system of claim 15, wherein the difficulties information signal comprises data indicating at least one particular error made by the user.

5 20. The system of claim 15, wherein the training signal comprises data indicative of training material which is presented at an internet web site.

21. The system of claim 15, wherein the training signal comprises a link to a customer service representative so as to allow the user to communicate with the customer service representative.
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22. The system of claim 15, wherein the training signal comprises data for a multimedia presentation.

23. The system of claim 15, wherein the communications network is a secure network with limited access.
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24. The system of claim 15, wherein the training means is modifiable in order to more effectively provide solutions to user difficulties, at the same time as the software remains unmodified.
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25. The system of claim 15, wherein the user device comprises:

25 a programming software module responsive to a programming input signal from the user, for providing an automatic help request signal if user difficulties are detected, and for providing a programming difficulties signal indicative of the difficulties;

video and hyperlink display equipment, responsive to the automatic help request signal, and also responsive to a user help request signal, for providing to the user the training hyperlink option;

5 a training hyperlink activation module, responsive to the programming difficulties signal, and also responsive to a hyperlink selection signal, for providing the difficulties information signal; and

multimedia presentation equipment, responsive to the training signal, for providing training to the user supplementary to video training.

10 26. The system of claim 25, wherein the training hyperlink activation module is also for providing a context inquiry signal if a hyperlink selection signal has been received but a programming difficulties signal is yet to be received, and wherein the programming software module is responsive to the context inquiry signal so that the programming difficulties signal will provide
15 contextual information enabling the user to receive customized training.

27. The system of claim 21, wherein the user uses the user device to communicate with the customer service representative, via an internet connection, concurrently as the user uses the user device to program the
20 programmable logic controller.